

Shared Mission and Collaborative Public Health Roles Agreement

Between

Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene

and

Wisconsin Division of Public Health

It is important to both the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene (WSLH) and the Division of Public Health (DPH) that we have consensus on our shared mission and on our separate but collaborative roles that contribute to the accomplishment of that mission.

Shared Mission

Dating to the turn of the 20th century when the state's public health laboratory and state's public health agency were created within state government these two agencies have shared the mission of protecting the health of Wisconsin residents and visitors. The "State Lab" came into existence through the efforts of fellow graduate students of UW Bacteriology Professor Edward A. Birge: Dr. Cornelius Harper, later State Health Officer and Dr. Harry Russell, the first laboratory director. Both the State Board of Health (now Department of Health and Family Services) and the Laboratory of Hygiene share responsibility of designing, implementing, evaluating and improving a surveillance system that will detect and define as quickly as possible any threat to the public health. We concur that our combined resources must be carefully coordinated to maximize our progress in this shared mission.

Wisconsin State Laboratory Role

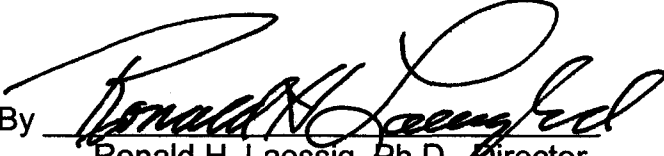
The Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene has primary responsibility to collect, translate and transmit to the Division of Public Health, that laboratory data which is salient to public health. This includes testing done in the State Lab itself, relevant testing performed in laboratories across the state and, to the extent possible, relevant testing done in laboratories located in other states and the CDC on clinical and environmental specimens from Wisconsin. Collection is the process of creating data streams from other laboratories to the WSLH. Translation refers to the process of designing and implementing mechanisms that will ensure DPH staff will understand the meaning and significance of each test result. Translation also includes ensuring the quality of the data, through quality assurance, is as complete and accurate as possible. Transmitting that laboratory data to the DPH is accomplished through close working relationships and through appropriate publication on the Public Health Information Network (PHIN). Collection, translation and transmission of laboratory data are not one way activities into a state agency, they also require communication to other partners at the local, state and federal level as well as providing information back to laboratories and those using laboratory data. This communication effort implies and requires the existence of a Wisconsin laboratory network for both clinical and environmental laboratory information. WSLH role is to lead, facilitate and coordinate the operation of that network and to provide technical assistance to DPH in network related activities.

Division of Public Health Role

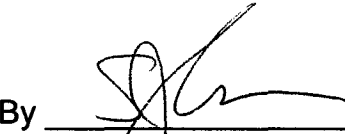
The Division of Public Health has primary responsibility to use laboratory data, combined with case reports and additional clinical and environmental information, to assess the state's health status, to identify threats to the public's health, and to develop prevention and intervention strategies to protect and improve that health. DPH has statewide responsibility for the three core functions of public health: assessment, policy development and assurance. This includes the application of epidemiology to create information from laboratory, clinical, environmental and other data. Working closely with local health departments and other community partners the DPH will establish policy for the protection and improvement of the public's health in Wisconsin.

Collaboration

The WSLH and the DPH will jointly plan and implement their separate but related roles to maximize the benefit of their resources in the accomplishment of their shared mission. Open and active dialogue at all levels between the two agencies will identify opportunities to use a given resource in either agency to accomplish the often separate but related objectives in the two agencies. In acquisition of technology, project and program development and resource allocation decisions by either organization these mutually defined missions and roles will provide guiding principles in decision making. Both the WSLH and DPH will strive to avoid any duplication of effort or divergent development of their related systems.

By 
Ronald H. Laessig, Ph.D., Director
Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene

Signed this day 9 of May, 2006

By 
Sheri L. Johnson, Ph.D.
Administrator and State Health Officer
Division of Public Health

Signed this day 3 of May, 2006